

The elemental population pressures and food shortages are now potentially within control of human technology. . . .

But there is no time to lose. It may in a sense be true, as Dr. Wallace says, that the earth can produce enough food for its inhabitants. He wisely adds: "There is, however, a limit to the population carrying capacity of this planet." Nor are space-rockets going to enable us just yet to call in new planets to redress the food situation in our old one.

PAUL BLOOMFIELD.

F.A.O./U.N. *The State of Food and Agriculture 1957.* Rome, 1957. F.A.O./U.N. Pp. x + 171. Price 10s.

THIS important annual production, a compendium of digested agricultural and other statistics, appears again in its now standard form and under the authority of B. R. Sen, the Director-General of F.A.O., using figures available up to June 30th, 1957. The "Summary" as usual is followed by "World Review and Outlook," and then by two rather more discursive sections which this year are entitled "Factors Influencing the Trend of Food Consumption" and "Post-war Changes in Some Institutional Factors Affecting Agriculture." There is much of immediate interest and much which will remain as a source of detailed information.

To the reader of the REVIEW the central point of interest is, as it were, the year's communiqué on the war between population and food supplies. To borrow some of the Director-General's words, over the last few years agricultural production as a whole, and food production, have increased at the rate of about 3 per cent annually, or rather more than 1 per cent faster than the growth of world population. It may be inferred that there has been a small improvement in food consumption levels. Whether the recent rate of expansion of production can be maintained remains to be seen. A significant feature of the last few years has been that, contrary to early postwar trends, food production has increased rather more

quickly in the less developed regions than in the rest of the world. While most of this difference is offset by the more rapid growth of population in the less developed countries, indications are that they have at least held their own. But the distance to be traversed is still so great that any progress so far is negligible. There can therefore be no slackening of efforts to raise nutritional levels. Inadequate and unbalanced diets are still the common lot of more than half the world's population, even though the threat of actual famine has receded.

G. C. L. B.

AGEING

Kutner, Bernard; Fanshal, David; Togo, Alice M. and Langner, Thomas. *Five Hundred over Sixty: A Community Survey of Aging.* New York, 1956. Russell Sage Foundation. Pp. 345. Price \$4.00.

THERE have been a number of valuable studies on old age since the war, both in this country and in the United States, but in general the approach has been necessarily coloured by the professional training of the author.

This book is particularly valuable as it is written by an inter-disciplinary team of physician, psychiatrist, anthropologist and statistician. The work was a combined research project undertaken by the Department of Health of New York City, Cornell University's Medical College and Social Science Research Center and the Russell Sage Foundation.

The investigators worked in the Kips Bay—Yorkville district of New York City, an area covering 359 residential blocks.

They set out to answer a number of interconnected questions, of which the following are the principal:

Is infirmity regarded as the "natural" or expected outgrowth of ageing? Are social isolation and physical health related? What stimulates older people to use or avoid community services? Is income the crucial element in retirement satisfaction? Are there other important factors?